

Application No. 10/708,500
Amendment dated September 20, 2005
Reply to Office Action of June 21, 2005

SEP 20 2005

flexible skin 26 does not form part of a structural support for the armrest and, as a result of its flexible quality, does not have a first thickness that provides rigidity to the skin. Instead, Filion '630 refers to reference numeral 22 as the "substrate" and describes that such a substrate "is employed on the backside of the foam to support the foam and the outer cover and for mounting the soft interior trim panel in a vehicle." (See Filion '630 at col.1, lines 19-22.) In the various embodiments shown, the substrate 22, 22a, 22b does not have a target area with a reduced thickness. Rather, the substrate of Filion '630 has a uniform thickness throughout. Accordingly, Applicants assert that persons skilled in the art would not interpret Filion '630 as teaching or suggesting the structure recited in claims 1 and 11, as alleged by the Examiner. For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of the claims 1 and 11 be withdrawn.

Claims 4-6, 8 and 9 each depend from independent claim 1 and are therefore in condition for allowance for at least the reasons stated above for claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of claims 4-6, 8 and 9 over Filion '630 be withdrawn.

Claims Rejected Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Filion '630 in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0125734 to Pokorzynski et al. Claims 3, 9 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Filion '630. Claims 2, 3, 9 and 10 each depend from independent claim 1 and are in condition for allowance for at least the reasons stated above for

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claim 1. Specifically, Filion '630 does not teach or suggest a substrate member forming part of the structural support for a trim component and having a first thickness outside a target area for providing a soft feel to the trim component, and a second thickness within the target area that is reduced relative to the first thickness, as discussed above. Pokorzynski '734 does not teach or suggest a modification of Filion '630 that would result in the invention recited in claim 2. For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of claims 2, 3, 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be withdrawn.

Applicants are of the opinion that no additional fee is due as a result of this response. If any charges or credits are necessary to complete this communication, please apply them to Deposit Account No. 23-3000.

Respectfully submitted,

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